

## Why Should You Get Involved?

- **Save time and money.** Some practices benefit wildlife and are also good for farm income. If you plant a shelterbelt border of trees or establish native perennial grasses along road corridors, ditch banks, and hedgerows, you should recoup your investment by reducing and/or eliminating expensive discing, burning, chemical spraying, and wind erosion associated with clean-farming. If your operation allows you to establish vegetation on levees or in fallow corners, you may be able to save

money in labor and equipment costs associated with mowing and discing.

- **Diversify your income base.** Wildlife can become a second cash crop. Increased populations of ducks, pheasants, and other hunted species may enable you to charge or increase hunter access fees. Many Central Valley rice farmers charge \$500 to \$1,500, or even more, for annual duck club memberships. It's not unusual for farmers to make \$50 to \$80 per

### The Endangered Species Act and Wetlands Issues

## A Program to Protect Farmers and Encourage Conservation

All of the practices suggested in this publication have been or are being used by some Central Valley farmers and many of the practices can be accomplished without involving endangered species or wetlands issues.

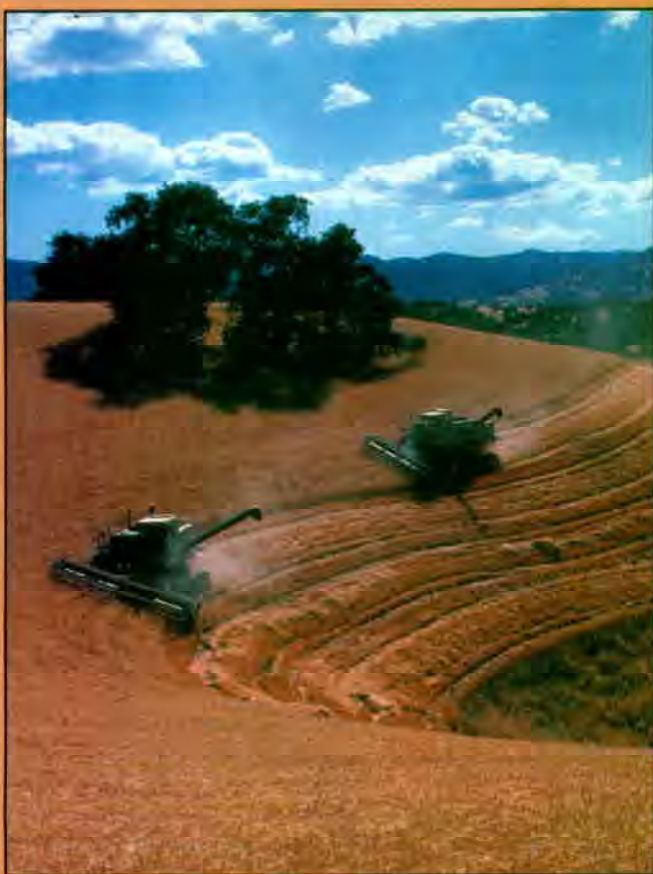
Understandably, endangered species and wetlands issues—as they relate to farming—raise special concerns with farmers.

Farmers who wish to create wildlife habitat want assurances they won't be penalized and that current or future farming operations won't suffer if their good stewardship attracts protected wildlife species. Farmers who wish to create wetlands for wildlife need to know that this won't diminish their water allotments and that they can resume farming the wetland acres if they wish.

In order to encourage wildlife conservation in the fullest sense it would help to provide a simple, "user-friendly" program that offers farmers the necessary incentives to improve habitat for wildlife while receiving assurances they won't run afoul of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or wetlands laws and policies. A consortium of representatives from farming and wildlife agencies have recognized this need and are now attempting to develop such a program in California.

Known by a variety of names, these approaches attempt to deal forthrightly with problems posed by the ESA. For example, a program initiated with timberland owners in North Carolina is now encouraging conservation of the endangered red cockaded woodpecker within forest habitats while giving landowners the protection they need regarding provisions of the ESA.

The initiation of this approach in California is helping to improve communication between farming and wildlife interests—a vital building block for this new endeavor. Check with your farming and wildlife agency contacts to learn how this evolving program may be able to help you develop wildlife habitat while safeguarding farming interests.



JACK KELLY QUARKING STATEWIDE IPM PROJECT